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TO: **W-2 Agencies**
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Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff

FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
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Bureau of Eligibility Management
Division of Health Care Financing

BEM/DWS OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 05-37

DATE: 09/19/2005

FS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC	<input type="checkbox"/>
CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	EP	<input type="checkbox"/>	★

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (EA) CHANGES IN BIENNIAL BUDGET ACT**

CROSS REFERENCE: Wisconsin Works Manual Chapter 17 Emergency Assistance

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 27, 2005

PURPOSE

This memo is a follow-up on DWS Administrator's Memo #05-14, which identified changes in the timeframe for Emergency Assistance (EA) eligibility based on 2005 Wisconsin Act 25, the recent Biennial Budget Act.

This memo supplements Chapter 17 of the Wisconsin Works (W-2) Manual and provides instructions to W-2 agencies and their subcontract entities for implementing the EA eligibility timeframe changes retroactive to July 27, 2005, when the Biennial Budget Act changes became effective.

SPECIAL NOTE ➤ W-2 agencies that subcontract for the administration of EA are responsible for communicating these changes to the W-2 subcontract entities and ensuring the W-2 subcontract entities implement these changes and any retroactive EA payments.

BACKGROUND

EA is available to eligible families facing a current emergency due to fire, flood, natural disaster, energy crisis, homelessness, or impending homelessness, including homelessness or impending homelessness due to domestic violence. Previously the timeframe for EA eligibility due to homelessness or impending homelessness was once within thirty-six months. The timeframe for EA eligibility due to fire, flood, natural disaster, energy crisis or homelessness due to domestic violence was once within twelve months.

2005 Wisconsin Act 25 amended Wis. Statute 49.138(1m) to change the timeframe for EA eligibility for homelessness or impending homelessness to a twelve month timeframe. The Act also combined all reasons for EA payments together in the same twelve month timeframe. These amendments became effective on July 27, 2005, the day after publication of the Act.

NEW POLICY

As a result of the 2005 Wisconsin Act 25 changes, families who are homeless or facing impending homelessness may be eligible for EA after twelve months since any previous EA payment for fire, flood, natural disaster, energy crisis, homelessness or impending homelessness.

The statutory change combines together the twelve month timeframe for EA eligibility due to homelessness or impending homelessness with the twelve month timeframe for EA eligibility due to fire, flood, natural disaster or energy crisis. Accordingly, an EA payment may be issued only once to a family during a twelve month period.

RETROACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

To retroactively implement the changes in the timeframe for EA eligibility back to July 27, 2005, the effective date specified by the Act, W-2 agencies and the W-2 subcontract entities handling EA must implement the following payment and tracking changes immediately. The W-2 agency and the W-2 subcontract entities must complete all of the following steps within two weeks from the date of this memo:

1. Review EA applications and the Emergency Assistance Tracking System (EATS) to identify any EA applications for homelessness or impending homelessness which were denied on July 27, 2005, or later because an EA payment for homelessness or impending homelessness was issued within the previous thirty-six months.
2. For any denied EA applications identified in step #1 above, identify those families who did not receive an EA payment (for fire, flood, natural disaster, energy crisis, homelessness or impending homelessness) within the previous twelve months before the denied EA application. Do not further consider for retroactive EA payments any families who already received EA for any EA reasons during the previous twelve months.

3. For any families identified in step #2 above who did not receive an EA payment already within the previous twelve months, confirm that the family would have been eligible for EA at the time the EA application was denied (on July 27, 2005, or later), based on the new twelve month EA timeframe for homelessness or impending homelessness.
4. For any families previously denied EA for homelessness or impending homelessness, and now confirmed to have been eligible for EA based on the new twelve month EA timeframe for homelessness or impending homelessness, make a retroactive EA payment to the family.
5. For any families paid a retroactive EA payment in step #4 above, create a new record in EATS with the previous EA application date to show the retroactive EA payment instead of revising the EATS record for the previously denied EA application. This method of creating a new EATS record for the retroactive EA payment will preserve the EATS record showing the previous denial instead of changing the previous EATS record to no longer show the denial.
6. Within two weeks from the date of this Memo, send a summary report for the W-2 agency to the DWS Regional Office. The summary report must show any EA applications for homelessness or impending homelessness which were denied on July 27, 2005, or later because an EA payment for homelessness or impending homelessness was issued within the previous thirty-six months. The summary report also must show any retroactive EA payments plus indicate if any previously denied EA applications were not issued a retroactive EA payment along with the reason for not issuing a retroactive EA payment.

EATS CHANGES

EATS is scheduled to be modified by September 23, 2005. The alert when an EA payment (referred to as a "grant" in EATS) already was made within thirty-six months for homelessness or impending homelessness will change to an alert when an EA payment/grant already was made within twelve months for any of the EA reasons. After the modification in EATS, the twelve months alert will be the same for all of the EA payment/grant types, and on the EATS Grants list page, all EA payment/grant types will show twelve month clock values.

CONTACTS

BHCE CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

★Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – Food Stamp Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC – Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.
DWD/DWS/BW-2/JM